

The Pinay Circle

An Invisible Power Network

This clandestine circle may have ousted several democratic governments since the early 1970s. What's on its agenda now?

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Perhaps more sinister and certainly more shadowy than the Bilderbergers, the Pinay Circle is an 'Atlanticist' right-wing organisation of serving and retired intelligence operatives, military officers and politicians who have conspired to "effect" changes in government. Amongst other things, it claims credit for engineering the election of Margaret Thatcher in the UK and may have been behind the ousting of Australia's Gough Whitlam.

Now almost forgotten, the decade of the '70s was a time of immense political upheaval, dirty tricks and incessant rumours of right-wing military *coup d'états* in leading Western democracies. Amongst the long list of resulting casualties of this 'decade of tension' were Britain's Prime Ministers Harold Wilson and Ted Heath, Australia's Gough Whitlam, Sweden's Olaf Palme, America's Jimmy Carter and France's François Mitterand. The more southern flanks of NATO's European axis—Portugal, Spain, Turkey and Greece—converted rumour into chilling fact via the steel-blue glaze of gun-barrels. Italy, home of Pizza, the Pope and *Propaganda Due* (P2), came in for its own brand of political fixit, courtesy of Uncle Sam's very own CIA.

As the decade of the '80s slowly slipped above the now less-than-pink eastern horizon, right-wing beneficiaries of a coordinated international destabilisation programme gave their heartfelt thanks. Among them were Britain's Iron Lady, Margaret Thatcher—Madonna of the armaments industry—and America's less brittle, and considerably less acute Ronald Reagan—humble originator of the mega-tax-buck-swallowing SDI "Star Wars" programme and also, thus, a valued friend of the boys at Guns-R-Us International.

These two decades saw a proliferation of right-wing, quasi-official and secretive groups that coordinated intelligence and propaganda and undertook covert 'black' operations around the globe. One of the most shadowy of all is the Pinay Circle, named after its founder, Antoine Pinay, Premier of France in 1951. Known more simply as *Le Cercle* ("The Circle"), it is recognised as a more clandestine sister organisation to the already very secretive Bilderberg Group¹—a "behind-the-scenes 'invisible' influence" network.² Both groups share a familiar membership which includes Henry Kissinger, Zbigniew Brzezinski and David Rockefeller. Each of these three luminaries of the international power network is, in addition to the foregoing, an influential member of the Trilateral Commission and the Council on Foreign Relations as well as being a regular attendee at Britain's Chatham House—the Royal Institute for International Affairs (RIIA)—shadowy twin to America's CFR.

Antoine Pinay was extremely influential in Europe and in the United States where he had forged links with President Nixon. Pinay attended the inaugural Bilderberg meeting in Oosterbeek, Holland, in May 1954. By 1969, Pinay, together with Jean Violet, a lawyer working for the French intelligence service SDECE, and Archduke Otto von Hapsburg, heir to the Austrian throne, formed *Le Cercle* and secretly began recruiting men of influence as members.³ The intention was to shift the political climate of Europe to the far right via a secretly financed campaign of propaganda and to establish a private intelligence service that would work, unofficially, with the existing security apparatus of the West. Author Stephen Dorril believes there are serpentine interconnections between *Le Cercle* and the *Gladio* network, a "stay-behind anti-Communist"⁴ military guerrilla force set up by NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) during the '50s and which was largely composed of ex-Nazis.

Le Cercle has a different flavour to Bilderberg, however. The latter is an important link to the 'overt influence' organisations cited above and almost certainly focusses its efforts

on the broader political issues, being careful to keep well away from 'direct actions'. *Le Cercle* has a much more 'hands-on' role. Interestingly, its membership is more heavily composed of serving or former members of various intelligence services, senior military officers as well as politicians, bankers and VIPs with right-wing connections. *Le Cercle* was unknown until 1,500 internal documents of the rightist (and *Cercle*-funded) Institute for the Study of Conflict were leaked to *Time Out* magazine in 1975. Subsequently, the documents have gone missing. At the time, the ISC was headed by CIA agent and *Cercle* Chairman, Brian Crozier, who was heavily involved in another covert action group known simply as "The 61".⁵

Unknown to Crozier, Hans von Machtenburg (a pseudonym), a senior intelligence official of Germany's intelligence service, BND, and a member of Crozier's "61", had been exchanging full reports on Crozier's secret get-togethers with Hans Langemann, formerly a senior-ranking officer of Germany's BND and latterly head of Bavarian State Security.

In a fit of depression, Langemann blew the whistle on a number of alarming and sinister conspiracies to the left-wing German glossy magazine *Kronket*. Soon the story was picked up and featured by *Der Spiegel*. One of Langemann's more sensational reports, dated 1979, states:

Specific aims within this framework are to effect a change of government

(a) in the United Kingdom—accomplished



The 1975 dismissal of Australia's Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam (left), may have been engineered by operatives within the Pinay Circle.

***Le Cercle* has intimate connections with a host of interlocking right-wing outfits including Heritage Foundation, Freedom Association, Bilderbergers, Propaganda Due (P2), Opus Dei, the Moonies and the Jonathan Institute.**

(b) in West Germany—to defend freedom of trade and of movement and to oppose all forms of subversion including terrorism.⁶

In another secret memorandum dated 8th November 1979 and addressed "Personal, for the state minister only", Langemann notes that "Crozier worked with the CIA for years." He concludes, therefore, "that they are fully aware of his activities", and goes on to observe that Crozier "has extensive connections with members, or, more accurately, former members of the most impor-

tant western security and intelligence services". Further on he advises that Crozier, together with "Dickie" Franks, Director of Britain's SIS, and Nicholas Elliott, a senior department head in MI6, "were recently invited to Chequers (the country home of the incumbent Prime Minister; in this case, Margaret Thatcher) for a working meeting." Langemann continues: "It must therefore be concluded that MI6 is fully aware of, if not indeed one of the main sponsors of" Crozier's "diverse circle of friends in international politics."

Additional subjects covered in the Langemann papers include the "involvement of the main intelligence and security agencies both as information sources and as recipients for information in these institutions", as well as "undercover financial transactions for political aims" that would be utilised by conducting "international campaigns aiming to discredit hostile personalities or events", the "creation of a (private) intelligence service specialising according to a selective point of view", and the "establishment of offices under suitable cover, each run by a coordinator from the central office. Current plans cover London, Washington, Paris, Munich and Madrid." The plans also called for "provision of contributions by certain well-known journalists in Britain, the US and other countries" and the organisation of "public demonstrations in particular areas on themes to be decided and selected."⁷

Le Cercle and its Chairman, Crozier, clearly had lined up a whole strategy of political 'actions' that were not only known about, but approved by the Western intelligence community in addition to leading political figures, including Prime Minister Thatcher and US presidential candidate Reagan.

In his autobiography, Crozier regales us with his repeat visits to the White House to meet senior administration figures. In 1980 he flew to California to meet Reagan and "brief him" on his network and offer his services when he became President. Crozier stayed in close touch during the election with William Casey, Reagan's campaign chief who was later appointed DCI of the Central Intelligence Agency. After Reagan's election victory he appointed Californian friend William A. Wilson to act as his liaison with *Le Cercle* and the related "61" group.⁸

Le Cercle has intimate connections with a host of interlocking right-wing outfits including WACL, the Heritage Foundation, Western Goals, ISC, Freedom Association, Interdoc, the Bilderbergers, Italy's *Propaganda Due* (P2), *Opus Dei*, the Moonies and the Jonathan Institute. Many of these are funded fully or in part by the American Central Intelligence Agency. Members have included Nicholas Elliott (British SIS/MI6 dept. head), the CIA's (ex) Director of Central Intelligence, William Colby, Colonel Botta

(Swiss military intelligence), Franz Josef Strauss (German Defence Minister, head of the CSU party and Bavarian Premier), Alfredo Sanchez Bella (head of European Operations for Spain's Secret Service and closely connected to *Opus Dei*), Giulio Andreotti (former Italian Prime Minister, P2 member and Mafia confidant), General Antonio de Spínola (head of the Portuguese putschists), Silva Munoz (former Franco minister and senior *Opus Dei* member), Monsignore Brunello (Vatican prelate and BNG agent), and Stefano della Chiaie (leading member of P2 and Italy's Secret Service, SID).⁹ This list is by no means complete.

Another major aim of The Circle was to influence West German elections to ensure that Franz Joseph Strauss, the ultra-right-wing leader of the Christian Social Union Party, became Chancellor of Germany. In the event, Strauss was defeated, due, it is believed, to effective countermeasures taken by Germany's security and intelligence apparatus, the BND and BfV, whose "operational chiefs do not follow his political lines".¹⁰

However, despite this setback, other projects were more successful. During *Le Cercle's* meeting held on 28th to 29th June 1980 in Zürich, Switzerland, discussions were focussed around "a series of appropriate measures to promote the electoral campaign of Presidential candidate Reagan against Carter. Elliott reported that, in this context, positive contact had been made with George Bush as well."¹¹

Journalist David Teacher, a keen investigator of *Cercle* activities, observes: "It is becoming more and more apparent that the treatment reserved for Harold Wilson at the hands of the intelligence services was only the UK end of an international phenomenon. Around 1973-75 a surprising number of governments were targeted by their own (or others') intelligence agencies because of their radical policies."¹² He goes on to list a number of known "destabilisation" programmes in which *Le Cercle* is known, or believed, to have been involved:

- the UK: the concerted efforts by elements in the British intelligence and security services, with CIA and BOSS¹³, to bring down Wilson, Thorpe and Heath
- the USA: the CIA's *Operation Chaos*, the FBI's *Cointelpro* programme and, of course, Watergate
- Australia: the loans scandal and other destabilisation of Gough Whitlam by the CIA and SIS

An additional *Cercle* target may have been Olaf Palme, Sweden's Prime Minister. In 1987, the leading Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* carried a

sensational story that the O3 section of the Swedish intelligence service, SAPO, was heavily involved in Palme's assassination, following their fury at his policy of *détente* towards the Soviet Union and possibly fearful that he might discover the extent of their implication in arms sales to Iran.

Other 'direct actions' possibly include a *coup d'état* in Belgium during 1973, "planned by *gendarmérie* officers and extreme-right-wing groups". By no means least were the allegations by France's leading daily, *Le Monde*, which, in 1978, revealed the activities of *Cercle* member and head of the SDECE intelligence service,

Alexandre de Marenches. *Le Monde* claimed that de Marenches led a domestic campaign of terrorism and disinformation.¹⁴ It is fairly apparent that these activities were, "designedly", to keep François Mitterand from office during the 1974 elections. However, with the exception of the Langemann papers and an ISC memo published in *Lobster* 17, there are no other *Cercle* documents available to confirm these allegations.

Despite a strong focus on European issues, the Pinay Circle was not unaware of the significance of establishing psyops 'action centres' in North America. In 1975, the Washington Institute for the

Study of Conflict (WISC) was launched under the chairmanship of George Ball. Characteristically, Ball, one-time Senior Managing Director of the enormous Wall Street international investment bank, Lehman Brothers, and Under Secretary of State (1961-66), was a member of the Trilateral Commission, on the Steering Committee of the Bilderberg Group, and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. His association with the WISC marks him as a close friend of *Le Cercle*. Other members of the WISC committee were Zbigniew Brzezinski and Kermit (not the frog) Roosevelt of the CIA. Four years later, in 1979, Maurice Tugwell, former head of Information Policy, a 'black propaganda' unit set up by British military intelligence in Northern Ireland, formed the Canadian Centre for Conflict Studies. The CCS largely operates on contract work for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the Canadian Department of National Defence, plus others.¹⁵

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We have seen that one aim of the Pinay Circle was to aid in the election of President Reagan. Presumably they can also cite this aim as being "accomplished". Their close connection to George Bush may also have extended to helping in his drive to election victory. Canada, too, veered sharply to the right during the '80s.

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Clearly, the decade of the '80s witnessed a marked shift to the political right in the Western democratic arena. It would be stretching credulity to suggest that this rapid swing in political ideology took place accidentally. It is also abundantly obvious that The Circle's primary influence resided in its top-level connections to the shadowy intelligence apparatus of the West. At the same time it possessed serious clout inside the sinews of transatlantic power that repose in the Council on Foreign Relations, the Royal Institute for International Affairs, the Trilateral Commission and the Bilderberg Group.

The foregoing outline, slim as it is, serves not only to underscore the inherent and potential weaknesses that reside in the institution of representative democracy, but also demonstrates the 'will-o'-the-wisp' nature of covert activities that hide comfortably behind the public face of government.

That a small handful of influential men across the planet may be able to manipulate 'free' elections to suit their personal and ideological advantage is not a new concept. Generally, utterances of this sort are met by the blanket rejection, "Conspiracy theory!", and discarded out of hand. Such rebuffs rarely take into account the underlying evidence, fragmentary as it is. Perhaps they are not meant to.

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Circle has not packed up its victorious bags; nor have its members disbanded. Attendees at the 1990 *Cercle* meeting at the sumptuous *Al Bustan* Hotel, Muscat, in Oman, included Jonathan Aitken (Minister of Defence Procurement), Alan Clark (Minister of State for Defence), Lord Julian Amery (Joint Chairman), Sheikh Qaboos (ruler of Oman), General Norman Schwarzkopf (the bear-like Commander of the Allied Forces in the Gulf), Paul Channon (former Secretary of State at the Department of Trade and Industry), the head of the Dutch Secret Service, an unnamed French Naval Admiral, plus other serving or former intelligence operatives and VIPs.¹⁶

Aitken, Clark and Channon have all been heavily implicated in the arms-to-Iraq affair examined by Sir Richard Scott. Significantly, Alan Clark revealed in his hugely successful *Diaries* that *Le Cercle* was funded by the Central Intelligence Agency.¹⁷

With its apparent *raison d'être* (anti-Communist psyops) clearly in tatters, one can only suppose that there is (or, perhaps, always was) an additional hidden agenda lurking behind *Cercle* activities. To understand what this may be, one must

look further ahead.

An increasing international focus is the call for 'minimalist' government. This has always been a central plank of *laissez-faire* economics. Deregulation, the freeing of government-imposed constraints on international business to engage in activities as it sees fit, is a long-term and obvious objective. If history is any judge, the attainment of this singular goal may usher in a new dark age of unrestrained capitalism, coordinated by the gargantuan transnational corporations—all of whom are heavily represented on the membership rolls of the CRF, the Trilats, the RIIA, Bilderbergers, etc.

In the meantime, a new millennium awaits... ∞

Endnotes

1. Stephen Dorril's *Lobster* 26, UK, 1993.
2. Eringer, Robert, *The Global Manipulators*, Pentacle Books, Bristol, UK, 1980.
3. Brian Crozier, in his book, *Free Agent*, confirms that he was an erstwhile "Chairman" between 1971 and 1985 but disputes that there was a membership in the "formal sense". In his words, it was an "informal group of broadly like-minded people". Make of this what you will. The word "insignificant" immediately jumps to my mind.
4. Telephone conversation with this writer. See Stephen Dorril's *The Silent Conspiracy*, Mandarin, 1993, p. 438.
5. Crozier, Brian, *Free Agent: The Unseen War, 1941-1991*, HarperCollins, London, 1993.
6. Ramsay, Robin, "Brian Crozier, the Pinay Circle and James Goldsmith", *Lobster* 17, UK, November 1988.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Crozier, *Free Agent*, pp. 178-186.
9. Teacher, David, "The Pinay Circle and Destabilisation in Europe", *Lobster* 18, UK, October 1989.
10. Ramsay, *Lobster* 17, *ibid.*
11. Teacher, *Lobster* 18, *ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. BOSS = South Africa's Bureau of State Security. Jeremy Thorpe was leader of the British Liberal Party until forced into resignation. See Stephen Dorril's and Robin Ramsay's *Smear!* (Fourth Estate Ltd, UK, 1991) for a full account of the British campaign of destabilisation.

14. Teacher, *Lobster* 18, *ibid.*

15. Stephen Dorril's *Lobster* 26.

16. Clark, Alan, *Diaries*, Phoenix Books, London, 1994.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 369-374.

About the Author:

David Guyatt was born and educated in Hampshire, England. His career in the stockbroking, investment and banking industries spanned 28 years, the last 12 of which he spent as a director and treasurer of a major British bank. There he gained insight into the world of international weapons financing and was familiar with all aspects of international capital, foreign exchange and money markets, with global trade finance his specialisation.

For the last five years, David has pursued a career as a freelance writer/researcher, contributing to a number of screenplays, novels, documentaries and feature articles. He is currently researching high-tech, anti-personnel, electromagnetic weapons systems and their focus within 'black' mind-control/behaviour-modification programmes in the military and intelligence communities.

His other in-depth research project at present centres on the structure, power and hidden influence of elitist groups and inter-linking tax-exempt foundations, including RIIA (Chatham House), Council on Foreign Relations, Trilateralists, Bilderbergers, the shadowy *Le Cercle*, the Rockefellers, Brothers Fund, Ford, Carnegie, Hoover, IMF, World Bank (*ad nauseum*)...